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NEWS RELEASE

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Court of Appeals Appoints New Bankruptcy Judge for Central District of California

SAN FRANCISCO — Chief Judge Mary M. Schroeder of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has announced the appointment of Costa Mesa attorney Theodor C. Albert as a bankruptcy judge for the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California.

Mr. Albert, 52, will serve a 14-year term in office, beginning June 1, 2005. He succeeds Arthur Greenwald, who is stepping down from the Central District bankruptcy bench after 16 years of service.

Mr. Albert is an experienced attorney who has practiced bankruptcy law almost exclusively for more than 22 years. In 1995, he co-founded and developed a successful Costa Mesa law practice, Albert, Weiland & Golden, a 20-lawyer bankruptcy boutique which handles all types of insolvencies. Prior to 1995, he was with the Newport Beach office of Buchalter, Nemer, Fields & Younger for 12 years.

Born in Fort Sill, Okla., Mr. Albert obtained a B.A. in History in 1975 from Stanford University and a J.D. from University of California at Los Angeles School of Law in 1978. He was admitted to the California bar in 1978. He has co-published bankruptcy articles and is an active member of the bankruptcy community. He was a founding director of the Orange County Bankruptcy Forum and chaired the Commercial Law and Bankruptcy Section of the Orange County Bar Association in 1987. He is also on the panel of trained mediators for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California and is certified as a Business Bankruptcy Specialist.

In 2000, the Orange County Bankruptcy Forum and the Orange County Bar Association gave Mr. Albert the Peter M. Elliott Award as the practitioner who best exemplifies the highest standards of ethics and scholarship. He previously served as master and former treasurer of the Peter Elliott Inn of Court and was a visiting scholar at the American Academy in Rome in 2003.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Central District of California is the nation's busiest with more than 64,000 bankruptcy filings in fiscal year 2004. The court has 21 bankruptcy judges and five divisional offices serving seven counties.

Judges of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit have statutory responsibility for selecting and appointing the 68 bankruptcy judges in the nine western states that comprise the Ninth Circuit. The court uses a comprehensive merit selection process for the initial appointment and for the reappointments. Bankruptcy judges serve a 14-year, renewable term, at a salary of \$149,132, and handle all bankruptcy-related matters under the Bankruptcy Code.

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